

## CLAIMS

1. A method of managing a plurality of operable wall panels, the method comprising:

providing an identification tag on each of the plurality of panels, each identification tag having panel information; and

5 wirelessly communicating between the identification tag of each of the plurality of panels and a controller, wherein the controller being operable to receive and transmit panel control data comprising the panel information.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

10 retrieving background data on each of the plurality of panels from a database using the received panel information; and

providing a user interface operable to be coupled to the controller for the input of commands from a user and for a display of information comprising selected background data.

15 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising providing a touch screen at the user interface.

4. The method of claim 2, further comprising providing a keypad and a display at the user interface.

5. The method of claim 2, and wherein the user interface is coupled to the controller via a data network.

20 6. The method of claim 2, further comprising storing one or more data entries for each panel selected from a group comprising project name, project number, series, face materials, panel number, panel size, date installed, date of last service,

description of last service, name of service agency, local distributor contact information, warranty status, and amperage data, in the background data.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

prompting a user to select a floor plan for the room at the controller;

5 establishing an arrangement of selected ones of the plurality of panels at the controller, when a floor plan has been selected, that is consistent with the selected floor plan;

determining at the controller whether a panel is to be used in establishing the floor plan and where the panel is to be positioned in a track system using the panel information  
10 of each panel moved into a reading position; and

wirelessly communicating instructional information from the controller to the user via an user interface to guide the proper panels into proper positions in the track system to effectuate the selected floor plan.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

15 providing at least one electric diverter switch operable to communicate with the controller; and

automatically actuating the at least one diverter switch to guide each panel to the proper positions in the track system to effectuate the selected floor plan.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising positioning the user interface  
20 on each of the panels.

10. The method of claim 7, further comprising positioning the user interface adjacent to a communication module, the communication module being operable to receive and transmit information between the controller and the panels.

11. The method of claim 10, and wherein the communication module comprises an antenna and a transceiver.

12. The method of claim 1, and wherein the controller comprises a transceiver.

5 13. The method of claim 1, and wherein the identification tag on each panel comprises a transponder.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising monitoring the panels via a camera.

10 15. The method of claim 1, and wherein the identification tag on each panel comprises a bar code identifier.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising scanning the bar code identifier.

17. A method of managing a plurality of operable wall panels in a room equipped with an overhead track system from which the panels suspend and in which the panels are movable to selectively partition the room, the track system including a reading portion, the method comprising:

5 providing an identification tag on each of the plurality of panels, each identification tag having panel information; and

wirelessly communicating between the identification tag of each of the plurality of panels and a controller via a communication module, the communication module being operable to receive and transmit data comprising the panel information, and the controller  
10 being operable to receive and process the panel information.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

retrieving background data on each of the plurality of panels from a database using the received panel information; and

15 providing a user interface operable to be coupled to the controller for the input of commands from a user and for a display of information comprising selected background data.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising providing a touch screen at the user interface.

20 20. The method of claim 18, further comprising providing a keypad and a display at the user interface.

21. The method of claim 18, and wherein the user interface is coupled to the controller via a data network.

22. The method of claim 17, further comprising storing one or more data entries for each panel selected from a group comprising project name, project number,

series, face materials, panel number, panel size, date installed, date of last service, description of last service, name of service agency, local distributor contact information, warranty status, and amperage data, in the background data.

23. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

5           prompting a user to select a floor plan for the room at the controller;

          establishing an arrangement of selected ones of the plurality of panels at the controller, when a floor plan has been selected, that is consistent with the selected floor plan;

10           determining at the controller whether a panel is to be used in establishing the floor plan and where the panel is to be positioned in the track system using the panel information of each panel moved into the reading position; and

          wirelessly communicating instructional information from the controller to the user via an user interface to guide the proper panels into proper positions in the track system to effectuate the selected floor plan.

15           24. The method of claim 23, further comprising:

          providing at least one electric diverter switch operable to communicate with the controller; and

          automatically actuating the at least one diverter switch to guide each panel to the proper positions in the track system to effectuate the selected floor plan.

20           25. The method of claim 23, further comprising positioning the user interface on each of the panels.

          26. The method of claim 23, further comprising positioning the user interface adjacent to the communication module.

27. The method of claim 26, and wherein the communication module comprises an antenna and a transceiver.

28. The method of claim 17, and wherein the controller comprises a transceiver.

5 29. The method of claim 17, and wherein the identification tag on each panel comprises a transponder.

30. The method of claim 17, further comprising monitoring the panels via a camera.

10 31. The method of claim 17, and wherein the identification tag on each panel comprises a bar code identifier.

32. The method of claim 31, and wherein the communication module comprises a scanner configured to scan the bar code identifier.

33. The method of claim 31, further comprising wirelessly communicating the scanned bar code identifier to the controller.

15

34. A system for managing a plurality of operable wall panels in a room equipped with an overhead track system from which the panels suspend and in which the panels are movable to selectively partition the room, the track system including a reading portion, the system comprising:

5 an identification tag on each of the plurality of panels and containing panel information;

a communication module positioned and oriented to wirelessly communicate with the identification tag of each of the plurality of panels that is moved into the reading portion of the track system; and

10 a controller communicating between the identification tag and the controller to provide panel information from the identification to the controller via the communication module.

35. The system of claim 34, further comprising:

15 a database accessible by the controller and containing background data on each of the plurality of panels; and

a user interface communicating with the controller operable to receive commands from a user and to display information;

20 wherein the controller uses the panel information to retrieve background data from the database and causes selected background data to be displayed on the user interface.

36. The system of claim 35, and wherein the user interface comprises a touch screen.

37. The system of claim 35, and wherein the user interface comprises a keypad and a display at the user interface.

38. The system of claim 35, and wherein the user interface is coupled to the controller via a data network.

39. The system of claim 34, wherein the background data includes one or more data entries for each panel selected from the group consisting of project name, project number, series, face materials, panel number, panel size, date installed, date of last service, description of last service, name of service agency, local distributor contact information, warranty status, and amperage data.

40. The system of claim 34, further comprising a user interface permitting a user to select a floor plan for the room; wherein the controller, in response to the user's selection of a floor plan, establishes an arrangement of selected ones of the plurality of panels consistent with the selected floor plan; wherein the controller uses the panel information of each panel moved into the reading position to determine whether the panel is to be used in establishing the floor plan and where the panel is to be positioned in the track system; and wherein the controller, based on the panel information, provides instructional information to the user through the user interface to guide the proper panels into the proper positions in the track system to effectuate the selected floor plan.

41. The system of claim 40, further comprising at least one electric diverter switch in the track system, the at least one electric diverter switch communicating with and being controlled by the controller; wherein the controller automatically actuates the at least one diverter switch to guide each panel to the proper positions in the track system to effectuate the selected floor plan.

42. The system of claim 34, and wherein the identification tag on each panel comprises a transponder.

43. The system of claim 34, and wherein the communication module comprises an antenna configured to communicate with the transponder.



44. The system of claim 34, and wherein the identification tag on each panel comprises a bar code identifier.

45. The system of claim 34, and wherein the communication module comprises a scanner configured to scan for the bar code identifier.